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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

## INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY Austria

DATE DISTR. 5 Sept. 1951

SUBJECT Interpretation of Communist Failure to Call  
Strike Following Fifth Wage-Price Pact

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NO. OF ENCLS.  
(LISTED BELOW)SUPPLEMENT TO  
REPORT NO.

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1. West,\* allegedly a member of the KPÖ Central Committee and frequent contributor to the Communist monthly Weg und Ziel, expressed bewilderment at the Party's failure to call an immediate general strike following the announcement of the fifth wage-price pact. He stated that Party leaders were almost equally divided on this matter, but that older members of the Central Committee lead by Fischer\*\* persuaded others against this step, giving the following reasons:

- a. Many key workers in Vienna plants were on leave at that time.
- b. The food situation during the summer is less critical than it will be in the coming months when fresh vegetables and fruit will no longer be available.
- c. The Party anticipates a sixth wage-price agreement this fall which would provide grounds for a general strike of all Austrian workers including non-Communists.

2. West believes that the Party lost considerable prestige by losing this chance to call a strike. He adds, however, that the loss would have been still greater had the strike failed. He says that the Party is now staking its hope on the election of shop stewards.

3. At a confidential briefing session called by Maierhofer, district secretary for the Baden district, on 16 July 1951 and held at KPÖ headquarters in Baden, Maierhofer read a document from the KPÖ Landesleitung in which the following points were set forth:

- a. Careful gauging of worker opinion in Vienna and Lower Austria shows that a general strike would not find full support, especially in view of the fact that even KPÖ shop stewards voted for the fifth wage-price agreement as witnessed in the basic ballot held by the union of building and wood workers trades. According to Maierhofer, although the Communists attended, only one dissenting vote was cast.
- b. The Landesleitung recommends that the occasion be used for self criticism, since the Party clearly lacked advance preparation. It urges members to direct all their efforts to the shop steward elections, and to recruit as many leftists as possible for the unions and shop councils. It feels that a sixth wage-price agreement will be concluded this fall, and urges an all-

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out effort to promote a strike at that time. The interim period is to be used to intensify cell activities and to counteract a sentiment that a general strike would be concomitant with an attempt by the Party to install a peoples democracy in Austria.

4. Discussions among Party officials at this meeting showed that the majority were secretly relieved that a strike was not called. Some point out that the Party on its own would have called a strike but for lack of Soviet support. Officials believe that the Party lost prestige through its failure to act successfully on behalf of the workers, and fear the Party will suffer through lowered membership morale and a loss of new recruits.

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25X1A \* Comment: Probably Franz West.

\*\* Comment: Presumably Ernst Fischer.

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